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SUBJECT: Guangzhou Train Station Returns to Normal Holiday
Operations

(U) This document is sensitive but unclassified. Please protect accordingly.

1. (SBU) Summary: Guangzhou Train Station sent 200,000 passengers home February 4, with air and bus lines also operating at full holiday capacity. Access control restrictions have been lifted, providing the first opportunity for Consulate employees to enter Railway Station Square in over a week. Unused tickets are still refundable and sales have commenced for travel between February 7 and 9. The CEO of a major appliance company in Shunde which employs 50,000 workers told the Consul General that he had been asked by the government to keep the factory open during the New Year's period so that workers would have a focus for their energies. End summary.

2. (U) Media reported 200,000 passengers departing Guangzhou Rail Station February 4. Guangzhou Railway Company projected smooth operations for the rest of the week as only 120,000 tickets remain available for departures today and New Year's Eve (February 6). At current capacity, all stranded passengers with valid tickets can depart by tomorrow and many will arrive home on New Year's Day (February 7). Guangzhou's air and bus departures on February 4 also moved record numbers of passengers, although weather conditions at many Central and North China destinations still caused delays.

3. (SBU) Security barriers have been opened, although police remain in position to re-close the area if necessary. Pedestrians now have full access to the train station area, providing the first opportunity in over a week for Congenoffs to walk around Railway Station Square. Crowds in the square remained large, but orderly, as they formed groups according to final destination. Police checked tickets and admitted passengers to the train station with none of the jostling or rushing seen in previous days.

4. (SBU) Ticket sales have resumed for train departures between February 7 and 9, with refunds continuing for unused train tickets. Approximately 100 sales and refund windows were opened to the public at the Canton Fair Jinhua Convention Center, which is within walking distance from the Guangzhou Train Station. Scalpers were evident outside the sales building and on street corners near the station area. Despite media reports of disorder caused by ticket scalpers, transactions inside and outside the convention center appeared normal to Congenoffs, with police and other security closely watching all areas.

5. (SBU) The CEO of Galanz, a major appliance company in Shunde (in the Pearl River Delta), told the Consul General on February 4 that Guangdong government officials had asked him to keep his factories, which employ 50,000 people, open during the Spring Holiday season. Those who were unable to return home - at least half of the workers - will be able to make money, which will soften somewhat their missing traditional celebrations. In addition, the company will keep dorms open, continue to provide food for the workers and even

organize entertainment and games. The fact that the government came calling and made this request did not surprise the CEO (who was recently named the equivalent of China's Businessman of the Year); what did surprise him was how accepting the workers have been throughout this situation and how understanding they have been of the problems encountered by the local and national governments.

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